

Figure 2 •  Steps for Better Thinking Skill Patterns

← Less Complex Skill Patterns

More Complex Skill Patterns →

Skill Pattern 0 Step 1, 2, 3, & 4 skills weak	Skill Pattern 1 Step 2, 3, & 4 skills weak	Skill Pattern 2 Step 3 & 4 skills weak	Skill Pattern 3 Step 4 skills weak	Skill Pattern 4 Intergrates Step 1, 2, & 3 skills
Overall Problem Approach: Proceeds as if goal is to find the single, "correct" answer	Overall Problem Approach: Proceeds as if goal is to stack up evidence and information to support conclusion	Overall Problem Approach: Proceeds as if goal is to establish a detached, balanced view of evidence and information from different points of view	Overall Problem Approach: Proceeds as if goal is to come to a well-founded conclusion based on objective comparisons of viable alternatives	Overall Problem Approach: Proceeds as if goal is to construct knowledge, to move toward better conclusion or greater confidence in conclusions as the problem is addressed over time
Common Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to realistically perceive uncertainties/ambiguities • Recasts open-ended problem to one having a single "correct" answer • Insists that the experts should provide "correct" answer • Expresses confusion or futility • Uses illogical arguments • Cannot evaluate or appropriately apply evidence • Inappropriately cites textbook, "facts," or definitions • Concludes based on unexamined authorities' views or what "feels right" 	Major Improvements Over Less Complex Skill Pattern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges existence of enduring uncertainties and multiple perspectives • Reaches own conclusion without relying exclusively on authority Common Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jumps to conclusions • Stacks up evidence quantitatively to support own view point and ignores contrary information • Confuses evidence and unsupported personal opinion • Inept at breaking problem down and understanding multiple perspectives • Insists that all opinions are equally valid, but discounts other opinions • Views experts as being opinionated or as trying to subject others to their personal beliefs 	Major Improvements Over Less Complex Skill Pattern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents coherent and balanced description of a problem and the larger context in which it is found • Identifies issues, assumptions, and biases associated with multiple perspectives • Attempts to control own biases • Logically and qualitatively evaluates evidence from different view points Common Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reluctant to select and defend a single overall solution as most viable • Selects a solution but unable to express adequate support for its superiority over other solutions • Writes overly long paper in attempt to demonstrate all aspects of analysis (problems with prioritizing) • Jeopardizes class discussions by getting stuck on issues such as definitions 	Major Improvements Over Less Complex Skill Pattern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After thorough exploration, consciously prioritizes issues and information • Articulates well-founded support for choosing one solution while objectively considering other viable options • Conclusion based on qualitative evaluation of experts' positions or situational pragmatics Common Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusion doesn't give sufficient attention to long-term, strategic issues • Inadequately identifies and addresses solution limitations and "next steps" 	Major Improvements Over Less Complex Skill Pattern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizes and addresses limitations effectively • Interprets and reinterprets bodies of information systematically over time as new information becomes available • Exhibits a practical, long-term vision • Spontaneously considers possible ways to generate new evidence about the problem Common Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable